ACUSOFT JOURNAL

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Summer's finally upon us once again. This is the time of year when many of us will be on the road traveling to places far and wide, but hopefully you can find some time to work and play with your ATARI and join us (ACUSOFT) at our monthly meeting. I must say that the attendance at last month's meeting wasn't bad for the first month of summer. Please continue to support your club by attending the meetings.

At the last meeting Paul Bell demonstrated World and Winter Games by Epyx on the ST. Both games are similar to the 8-bit Summer Games by the same manufacturer. However as you can imagine, the graphics are superb. It was an excellent demo and most members felt the games were worth the money. My thanks to Paul for a good job. By the way its worth mentioning that this was only the second meeting that Paul has attended! He hasn't even had time to join the club, but yet he is volunteering to help. Don't sit back and reap all the benefits of the club without contributing. Step forth and volunteer to demo your favorite program. Give me a call-NOW!!

Next month, Brian Steiner will demonstrate Music Studio by Activision. Also, I hope to show my power strip that is modified for surge protection. For those that don't know, my MODEM was zapped by a power surge last month. This was the second occurrence. You'd think I'd learned something from the first time. But no, I let it happen again. This sure is a drain on my ST saving account. I may never get one at this rate. Anyway, take it from me. The next time there is a storm, be safe and unplug your equipment.

The Bragg PX is still selling 520STs. The initial 5 were sold quickly and consequently another 6 were ordered and are now for sale at $729.00. These 520STs are the new design that have the single-sided drive built-in like the 1040. The exchange is also selling drives and the SM804 printer. Software is on order and should arrive soon.

ELECTIONS

Have you been thinking about elections for new officers? A slate of proposed officers WILL be presented at this next meeting. The elections, held in August, are open to any current ACUSOFT member. Nominations will be taken from the floor. The proposed slate of officers is just a starting point to get the elections going. If you are interested in being an officer please notify any current board member. Remember, this is your chance to contribute to the success of the club and also to do your part in keeping the club going.

BUY, SELL, OR TRADE

Members are allowed to bring software (originals only) or hardware to sell or trade to the monthly meetings. This is a non-commercial service for members only. Dealers are not welcomed and will not be allowed to participate. Individuals can make whatever deals you want, but no money is to exchange hands on school property. You will be allowed to display your merchandise before and after the regular meeting.

HELP-LINE

Here is a listing of people who are willing to help you with questions and problems that you might have.

Howard Abner, 484-7060, Eves 6-9:30. Data Perfect, SynCalc, word processing, general questions.

Bill Gardner, 485-2619, Eves 7-10. Synfile, general questions.

Lyle Law, 864-7347, Eves before 10. Anything.

Sam Carter, 425-5180, Eves 7-10. Deep Blue-C.

GB Johnson, Eves 7-9. DB Man, VIP Professional, Publishing Partner, Flash.

Ed Devenish, 567-6140, Eves 8-12, Anything for 8-bit.

Kenneth Boggs, 425-7299, Aft/Eves 3:30-10:30. Any ST questions.

Jeff Heinen, 432-9423/3085, Anytime. ST Flight Sim, any ST questions.

We would like to list your name and phone number in the newsletter. You don't have to be a computer whiz, just be willing to help people with the problems they have. Help can be on games, languages, spreadsheets, hardware, graphics, music, repair, ANYTHING!!! You can sign up as an expert in an area or just a specific program. If you can be of assistance, call me (Howard), or leave a message on the BBS. Remember how it was when you were looking for help. THIS IS WHAT USER GROUPS ARE ALL ABOUT-"HELPING EACH OTHER".

WORLD OF ATARI FAIRE SANTA CLARA SHOW DEBUTS — "FINALIZED" ATARI LASER PRINTER NEAR-BETA WORD PERFECT & MORE

BY NAT FRIEDLAND, ANTIC EDITOR
6/21/87

With all the other Atari Fairs that took place during the past 12 months and the huge *Consumer Electronics Show* just three weeks ago, it was surprising to find that there was so many new products to see last weekend during the hastily-organized World of Atari Faire at the year-old Santa Clara Convention Center but several unfamiliar companies with impressive ST software made their Atari Fair debuts last weekend. And a near-production version of the Atari SLM804 laser printer had its first public showing. This report concentrates on products that have not been reported on previously.

The Atari laser printer is smaller and lighter than most current models, but seems just about as fast and sharp. It was operating in Diablo 630 emulation with a 4Mb Mega ST running a pre-release version of the Microsoft Write word processor with a WYSIWYG display. The laser controller board is in a modem-sized box cabled between the ST's high-speed Direct Memory Access (DMA) port and the printer. This controller box also has a second DMA port for connecting a hard disk.

This 300 dots-per-inch printer supports Atari's GDOS (which automatically uses the highest resolution available to a printing device). We picked up a selection of the sharp graphics and muli-font printouts that the Atari SLM804 kept churning out throughout the day. Late summer or September is the current estimated market arrival for the Atari Desktop Publishing System.

At a neighboring booth, Word Perfect was showing a near-beta version of the forthcoming ST edition of its bestselling word processor. The GEM-based software, due in September, looked extremely fast and powerful. It will list at $395 but is often discounted by more than 50% in the IBM version. The WP rep said that the company is working closely with Publishing Partner's developers to assure immediate desktop publishing compatibility for the word processor.

Programmers will love Omniware's new Edit/Booster, an ST text editor that also generates GEM code by mouse. Select "Draw A Circle" from a drop-down menu and the GEM code apppears in your program. The version currently on sale just works with C, but updates for GFA BASIC, Personal Pascal and Modula-2 are promised soon. Omniware, based in Bellevue, Washington also showed a desk accessory controller for the widely used Hewlett-Packard Laserjet printer and an H-P terminal emulator.

Iliad Software of Orem, Utah, another new entry, showed a powerful, user-friendly CAD/drawing program, Athena II, selling for $99.95. Athena requires a 1Mb ST, but functions in either color or monochrome. Coming soon is a circuit-testing simulation program called Circuit Maker. The company was also showing a multiuser, multitasking operating system, PDOS, which is similar to the system used on 68000-based VME workstations.

A wide-ranging product line of specialized business applications for the ST was shown by Hi-Tech Advisors of Winter Haven, Florida. Their $199 titles included Church Manager, Service Station Manager, Video Store Manager, Inventory Pro and Sales Pro Plus.

Mail Pro handles custom mailing lists and form letters for just $69. SBT of Sausalito, California kicked off a line of dBASE III business accounting modules based on the ST's dBMAN clone.

Beckemeyer Development Tools of Oakland, California showed their latest addition, a touch-screen restaurant menu system. The demonstration model for a Chinese restaurant was almost frighteningly complete and efficient.

Two image scanners were shown at the fair. Navarone, of Sonora, California had a $1,239 ST system including the Canon IX-12 scanner. The simpler $99.95 IMG Scan from Seymor-Radix of Irving, TX used a small box that tapes to the print head of any dot matrix printer that supports graphics.

Old-timer Lou Schwing of Astra Systems was gleefully demonstrating the ruggedness of his HD+ unit which combines an 20Mb hard disk and a double-sided ST 3.5" disk. The HD+ was notably cool and even kept operating as he waved it in the air and laid it on its side. DeskCart, a $99.95 cartridge from Quantum Micro of Liverpool, New York is a real-time clock/calendar with a full set of Sidekick-type desk accessories including a filer, calculator, address book, notebook, macros, RAMdisk driver and other utilities. The cartridge format is claimed to save memory and operate faster.

The World of Atari was busy and profitable for most exhibitors throughout its Friday-Saturday run. The thriving Antic booth was showing upcoming ST graphics software from The Catalog -- Cyber Paint, a paint program that creates images for animation with Cybermate, and Spectrum 512, a smooth-lined, ultra-clear paint program that can display all the ST's 512 colors simultaneously.

ATARI SCUTTLEBITS
Bob Kelly
Computer Market .... Random Observations

Have you visited a computer magazine store lately? If not, go take a close look. Times are a-changing and some harsh adjustments may be on the way.

One of my most enjoyable pleasures connected with home computing over the years has been reading the monthly computer magazines whether Atari specific or those for other popular computers. The store I generally visit is located in the financial district of downtown Washington, D.C. It offered the widest assortment of computer magazines of any store I knew. One wall in the store was 30+ feet long full of computer magazines. Each individual rack on the wall was capable of holding not just one magazine as is frequently the case in many stores, but 10 to 15. Over time, the magazine overflow spilled onto the floor and to other parts of the store. It was home computer magazine heaven. PC Week always appeared to be most in demand with sales numbering in the several 100's per issue. The Atari related magazines didn't fare too bad with Antic probably the largest seller at 50 to 75 issues per month.

Lately, this scene has radically changed. In the last eight months or so, the space occupied by computer magazines has been reduced by at least half. In addition, the number of magazines per rack is down. For those magazines still on the shelf, many copies of a single issue are now distributed over multiple racks rather than in one rack as before. Coupling this experience with other information I obtained, it appears computer magazine sales are once again declining.

What does this mean to you? With computer magazine sales trending down, another wave of magazine failures is on the horizon. As for Atari specific magazines, the commercial publications which may be in trouble are primarily directed at the 8 bit market. The likely candidates for failure are no secret! Also, look for some small ST specific magazines to go under. Your bottom line .... pause and reflect before writing that check to renew your magazine(s) this year. After this reflection, don't fail to subscribe to those you need lest they disappear.

Atari News & Views

Everyone should be aware by now that Atari and

Commodore have settled their litigation. The terms of the settlement were not publicly disclosed. There are some interesting aspects to the settlement which I will expand on in a future column.

In April, Atari announced it will be selling $75 million in convertible Eurobonds to European investors only. Standard and Poor's announced it had assigned a single B- rating to the debentures. On April 14th, Moody's Investors Service assigned an initial rating of a single B3 to the Atari Eurobond issue. Moody, in issuing this rating, stated, "Atari's product line is limited and significant amounts of funds will be required for capital spending and research and development to sustain and broaden the company's narrow product line." Translation, Moody believes Atari is a risky investment. However, you can be a winner when investing in Atari provided they diversify the product line which, in turn, is a function of how much R & D spending occurs.

Some current financial data on Atari follows:

Fiscal Year	EPS*	Total Revenue	Net Income	Share Book Value
86	1.06	258.1	25.0	2.31
85	.62	141.9	(14.3)	.....

* EPS = earnings per share

Atari's net income for 1986 was $25 million versus a ($14.3) million loss in 1985. As a result of this performance, the price for Atari common stock rose and appears to have settled in the area of $25 per share, an increase of more than 60% this year. In comparison, the computer industry witnessed a rise of only 33%.

For those of you who believe Atari's low selling prices translate into below average financial returns relative to other firms in the computer industry, the following table should correct this impression:

Atari

Computer/periph. Ratios	Corp.	Industry
Profit margin	9.7%	5.7%
Return on common equity	NE	10.1%
Return on total assets	10.1%	5.9%
Revenue to assets	186%	104%

Source: Dow Jones

As can be seen, Atari's profit margin is more than 40% higher than the industry average and look at

the relationship of revenue to assets. The motto may be "Power without the Price" to the consumer but to the senior officers and stockholders the motto is more like "Power is in the Profit Margin". Yes Virginia, Atari is a business and is very good at it.

Finally, when are people going to stop talking as if Warner Communications no longer owns any portion of Atari. The fact is Warner owns 30% of Atari with Jack Tramiel holding the controlling portion of common stock, roughly 54%.

Timeworks

In my last column, I pointed out how Timeworks' tax program, Sylvia Porter's Swiftax, was not recommended for purchase - a dog, to be explicit. Timeworks has another program which is a WINNER! This judgement is not mine alone, but many have found DATA MANAGER ST to be a program easy to use and flexible, permitting use in varied applications. You would think that Timeworks would do all to promote the sale of this product. Well, you are wrong.

Recently, a close friend of mine called Timeworks inquiring when they planned to introduce a utility that would permit transferring DIF files from other databases into Data Manager ST (DIF stands for Data Interchange Format, a quasi industry standard file format). The response from Timeworks at the other end of the telephone was, "We have had hundreds of calls requesting such a utility. There are currently no plans to make such a capability available to the ST user."

A response such as this illustrates why so many software firms in the past went belly-up. What is amazing is that this attitude still exist today. With a program that could significantly add to total sales, Timeworks should tell the user where to go rather than to go to ____.

Electronic Arts

For all the "old" 8 bit computer owners, Electronic Arts (ECA) is a magic name. This company burst on the scene in 1983 with such outstanding software as M.U.L.E., Archon, and Pinball Construction Set. All of these programs received critical acclaim, brought in substantial sums of money and made Trip Hawkins, the founder of ECA, something of a celebrity.

Trip, after making a good portion of his fortune selling software to Atari owners, abandoned Atari when hard times hit. Hawkins announced that Amiga was the home computer of the future and, by inference, Atari

stood little chance, even with Jack Tramiel. So, Trip had ECA produce software for the Amiga. The Amiga has not lived up to Trip's prediction (one down). In fact, it's the Amiga that's captured only a small portion of home computer market sales while Atari's grew significantly.

Trip, seeing the error of his ways, recently began to produce such "outstanding" pieces of software for the Atari ST as Skyfox (two down).

Undaunted, Trip now believes Starglider to be "the only really outstanding game for the ST" (three down). Thus, he has contracted with Jez San of Argonaut Software to market future programs under the Electronic Arts logo.

Personally, I think Trip is on a trip and it may end abruptly. Given Trip's attitute, I have successfully and with little regret avoided buying ST software marketed specifically under the Electronic Arts logo. This guy must think we're all fools. What did Lincoln say about fooling people some of the time, but not all of the time? Unfortunately, he is taking over a company that produced some of the best software for the Atari - Batteries Included (BI). ECA is purchasing the rights to the BI brand name as well as the rights to market current products. This presents a moral dilemma which I have not yet resolved.

User Hints

While using my ST for the past year and half, I have accumulated what I consider to be some very helpful public domain utilities/accessories. I was asked to name a few of the more important. They are:

ScrSaver.ACC - Blacks out screen without turning off CRT (monitor) switch. A great addition to whatever word processing or database program you may use.

Coldboot.TOS - Click on this little 56 byte program and it cold starts your ST without having to turn the computer switch off and on (from Dec., 1986 Compute ST magazine). Great for clearing accessories out of memory.

Moustrap.ACC - Controls cursor preventing drop down menus from accidentally appearing. To display menus, the right mouse button must be depressed (from Start Magazine, Vol.1, #2). This accessory does not work with any program that requires use of the right button on the mouse such as FLASH.

DCopy19.TTP - This is a shareware program ($5). It copies, erases, hides, locks, renames, de-arcs files,

formats disks and lots more. An all-in-one gem.

. These programs are available either on your local BBS, CompuServe, Genie, or the Current Notes library.

See you next time and since I am going to take an extended summer vacation, it will be the September issue.

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WRITE AN ARTICLE

CES CHIGAGO 1987

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ANTIC'S JUNE '87 CES REPORT
OPENING DAY OVERVIEW - MAY 30

BY NAT FRIEDLAND, ANTIC EDITOR

* Atari's 8-bit computer line is far from dead -- with a new double-speed, double-density 5 1/4 inch disk drive due this summer, as well as the long-awaited 1200 baud plug-in modem and the 80-column box...plus the XE Game System that comes with 64K, a keyboard, a light gun and Flight Simulator II.

* The ST has yet another new wave of remarkable and mind-boggling products on the way. Within our first hour at CES we saw a 4-megabyte memory board that goes into any ST without soldering, and the Hybrid Arts ADAP Soundrack CD- quality stereo sampling and editing system that competes with the vastly more expensive Synclavier and Fairlight in high-end MIDI.

And these are just quick first impressions from the opening hours of a Consumer Electronics Show that supposedly was not going to produce any major new Atari announcements...

The first day of CES is still underway as I write this on Antic's trusty Radio Shack 100 in hopes of catching a special Saturday merge that ANTIC ONLINE has arranged with CompuServe. So let's get right to the opening round of news:

8-BIT UPDATE

We'll start with the good news for 8-bit users. The XF551 disk drive is the big surprise. It's a compact 5 1/4 inch drive in XE gray, about 3/4 the size of the now- discontinued 1050 drive and priced in about the same $160 range as the 1050. The XF551 is also claimed to be 2.9 times faster than a 1050 and boasts true double density -- as well as automatic compatibility with every other density format ever used for the 8-bit Atari. It seemed clear from talking to a number of Atari sources that a 3 1/2 inch disk drive for the 8-bit computers is now unlikely to be produced.

The XF551 drive will have a new ADOS operating system which is nearing completion by OSS, the creators of DOS 2 and DOS 2.5. Promised features of ADOS include a tree structure allowing directories and easy toggle between menu or command operations.

According to Atari's Jose Lopes, the key engineer/ designer of the new XE products described in this dispatch, the first XF551 drives can be expected to start trickling into the stores by July. The same July arrival date now holds true for the 80-column XEP80 display box (reviewed in the July '87 Antic) and the new 1200 baud SX212 modem. Valdes says both products have been delayed by a wait for delivery of main chips, but all other components and packaging are stockpiled in readiness for assembly at Atari's Taiwan factory.

AtariWriter Plus 80 was operating on the XEP80 in a razor-sharp 80-column display at the Atari Booth. The SX212 modem will be bundled with a new version of Keith Ledbetter's famed Express software which the author is scheduled to demonstrate later in the show.

XE GAME SYSTEM

The first working pre-production prototypes of the XE Game System were on view atop the roof of Atari's large booth structure, along with a real Cessna airplane that Atari somehow got into the new CES North Hall. The Game System is essentially a two-piece 65XE computer that costs as much as a 130XE.

But instead of 128K memory, you get a light-gun, a joystick and three games -- Flight Simulator II on cartridge, Missile Command in ROM and a pistol game called Bug Hunt. At least 18 arcade and disk best-sellers are now promised for Atari cartridge by Christmas, including 1 On 1, Gato, Midnight Magic, Karateka, Choplifter and Blue Max. Most titles are to sell for $19.95 each.

Atari Software Director John Skruch says the XE can get as much as 256K on a bank-switching cartridge. Flight Simulator II only required 128K. Two hard-hitting TV commercials for the Game System were on Display. The system is designed to be sold in separate pieces overseas. Eventually the light-gun will be available in the USA as an 8-bit peripheral. An ST mouse will work on the XE Game System in trackball mode -- CONTROL-T.

ANOTHER ST BONANZA

This CES had another dazzling array of ST computer products on display. We'll be looking at a lot more of them in our later reports. During just our first hours around the crowded Atari area, here's what we found that seemed especially impressive:

Micro D of Canada was showing a prototype 2/4Mb memory upgrade board that is supposed to install inside any ST without soldering. The Data-Free Board will sell for $159 without RAM chips. The 4-megabyte upgrade requires 32 chips and the 2Mb takes 16. The chips cost $30 each from Micro D or you can shop for a better price on your own. Hybrid Arts, the king of Atari MIDI developers, was showing their $1995 ADAP Soundrack digital sampling system, which will be on sale in July. ADAP offers the sound quality of compact disks -- in true stereo if you get a dual hardware setup. On a stage in the Atari area, ADAP was in action -- effortlessly pulling selected portions off any tape and manipulating the sound in real-time with a simple visual interface. Sounds could be played back in reverse, cut and pasted, stretched, faded and otherwise manipulated, as fast as you could click a mouse.

Frank Foster of Hybrid Arts told Antic that Tom Hudson is looking into the ADAP math co-processor box for speeding up certain math-intensive operations of his graphics software (DEGAS, CAD-3D) such as ray tracing.

Springboard was showing their little-publicized ST conversion of Certificate Maker at the Atari booth.

Shelbourne Software's 3D Breakthrough, the first ST game using the Stereotek 3D Glasses, was a spectacular sight. You move through an elaborate maze by shooting your way through flashy barriers. The disk will also include a non- 3D version that doesn't require glasses.

Sorry, gotta cut off now to try for same-day upload. Lots more Atari news from CES will be in our follow-up reports on ANTIC ONLINE.

CES WRAPUP

ANTIC'S CES JUNE '87 WRAP-UP # SECOND ANNUAL ATARI ROAST
BY NAT FRIEDLAND, ANTIC EDITOR

Towards the end of the Consumer Electronics Show, we got our first look at some additional important ST software: Broderbund is jumping into the ST marketplace with Art Director and Film Director, a DEGAS-quality paint program that will be packaged together with an animation module for $79.95. This software, originally designed by the Hungarians who did ST Battlezone, is expected to ship in August. Features include: rescale, stretch, distort, bend, bulge, spin, perspective, scroll and spin.

Not quite as far along is the ST version of Broderbund's all-time bestseller, Print Shop. It is due this fall at $49.95 and will be similar to the sophisticated Macintosh version. Also coming from Broderbund this fall is the ST Karateka at $34.95.

Timeworks Desktop Publisher this fall will join the company's ST word processor, spreadsheet and database software.

Spitfire 1940 is an ST flight combat game coming from Avalon Hill this summer. We also picked up an 8-bit review copy of their Guderian wargame.

And back at the bustling Atari booth, we got a look at Bentley Bear Goes To School -- a new ST educational series programmed in Israel and featuring the lovable bruin from the Crystal Castle arcade game. Four titles for grades K-6 are to be marketed within 30 days and there will eventually be some 20 in the series. The animation in each title such as Magical Mathematics is of very high quality and the packages will sell for $19.95 apiece.

ANNUAL ATARI ROAST

In its second year, the CES Monday night dinner of the ChicagoLand Atari Users Group (CLAUG) has become the Atari community's de facto annual roast.

After the visitors refuel themselves following a hectic day at the show, the event becomes a regular CLAUG meeting with every professional making a statement and answering questions.

This year Atari vice president Leonard Tramiel

revealed that a 16-bit graphics workstation is in a fairly advanced stage of development. This would be compatible with the ST but much more powerful. He said that any 32-bit multitasking computer would need to run Unix, but it was a problem deciding which competing version of Unix would be best.

Marketing communications director Neil Harris stated that ST Word Perfect, due in July, runs five times faster than the bestselling IBM version.

Harris explained that Atari's top priority at this particular CES was to revitalize the 8-bit line by packaging a redesigned 65XE as a high-end game system, in direct competition with Nintendo and Sega. That's why the Mega ST and the Atari Laser Printer were not displayed this time. According to Harris, the XE Game System was receiving an enthusiastic early response from mass-market purchasing agents.

MORE XF551 AND ADOS

Here's some additional details about the new Atari 8-bit disk drive and other Atari hardware. Essentially, the XF551 is an adaptation of the standard disk drive mechanism being used for Atari's IBM clone. The 360K, double-sided, double-density 5 1/4 inch disk drive runs 2.9 times faster than the Atari 1050 and is due in the stores this summer at a $199.95 list-price.

The XF551 can automatically adapt itself to today's single density and enhanced density DOS disks. However, ADOS, the new OSS operating system coming with the XF551 includes a tree structure allowing subdirectories, easy switching between menus or keyboard commands, and a high degree of file recovery safety.

Bill Wilkinson of OSS says that ADOS will run on any Atari-compatible disk drive, from the old 810 to a 16Mb hard disk. Although 8Mb is the upper limit for efficient operation, a larger hard disk can be partitioned into several logical drives. DOS 2 and 2.5 files can be read into ADOS, but ADOS is not fully compatible with the older operating systems.

Along with the XF551, the Atari products announced in January at the previous CES are now also scheduled for summer release. This impressive list includes the Mega ST in 1, 2 and 4 megabytes, a $1,500 laser printer, the Atari PC clone, the $150 XE Game System version of the 65XE, the 80-column XEP80 display box and the 1200-baud SX212 modem.

By the way, Atari is going back to Chicago in three weeks, where it will show off the ST's MIDI power and become the first personal computer company ever to exhibit at NAMM, the musical instrument industry's show.

ACUSOFT

The Atari Computer User's Society Of FayeTteville (ACUSOFT) is an independent computer user's club and is not affiliated in any way with Atari Inc. The sole purpose of the club is to develop and share the computer knowledge of the members. Piracy of software will not be tolerated by the club or fostered in any way.

Membership dues are $18 per year. Payment of dues entitles the member: to attend meetings, to vote, to receive each issue of the newsletter, and to utilize the club library and bulletin board. Each resident in the household of a member is considered an associate member. Associate members are entitled to the same privileges as a regular member, but will not be eligible to vote. Only one newsletter will be sent to each household.

Other Atari user's groups will receive a copy of the newsletter without charge if a copy of their own is sent in return. Such groups may extract any portion of the ACUSOFT Journal for their own use, providing acknowledgement of the source and author is made.

Advertising space is available. Please write ACUSOFT, P.O. Box 1117, Fayetteville, N.C. 28302 for further details.

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